DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 851 UD 022 621

TITLE	Inner City Private Education: A Study.
INSTITUTION	Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Milwaukee, Wis.
PUB DATE	82
NOTE	64p.
AVAILABLE FROM	The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, 1100 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - General (140)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Catholic Schools; Educational Quality; Elementary Education; Equal Education; Family Characteristics; Inner City; *Institutional Characteristics; *Parent Attitudes; *Private Schools; Religious Factors; *School Effectiveness; Student Characteristics; *Teacher Characteristics; Urban Schools

ABSTRACT

Fifty-four inner city Catholic and other private elementary schools, whose student population is at least 70 percent minority, were studied to determine their educational impact, to describe pupils' family backgrounds, and to identify factors that influence academic achievement and school effectiveness. The study found that: (1) clientele of these schools have lower income levels than the national population; (2) parents have modestly high educational levels; (3) parents value quality education and religious education as separate motives for sending children to private schools; (4) strong bonds link teachers, administrators, parishes, and parents; (5) teachers are motivated by intrinsic job satisfaction more than by money; (6) the schools show modest propensity toward selectivity through admission but not through expulsions; (7) the schools face socialization problems, but have demonstrated some success in dealing with discipline problems; (8) school factors, especially teacher attitudes and students' school experience, influence student behavior and achievement; (9) school effectiveness is enhanced by socialization-oriented school policy and school-community cooperation; (10) parents rate school quality highly; and (11) the schools do not enhance white flight. It was also found, however, that the survival of inner city private schools is threatened by financial problems, decreasing numbers of religious faculty, and deteriorating facilities. (Author/MJL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED224851

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Virgil C. Blum
Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Inner City Private Education: A Study

Copyright 1982
The Catholic League for Religious
and Civil Rights
1100 West Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233

CONTENTS

Foreword by Virgil C. Blum, S.J. i

Chapter 1 *The Schools and Their Clients* 1

Chapter 2 *Parental Demand for Inner City Private Schools* 9

Chapter 3 *Administration of Inner City Private Schools* 15

Chapter 4 *Teachers in Inner City Private Schools* 19

Chapter 5 *The Egalitarian Versus Elitist Controversy* 29

Chapter 6 *Behavior and Achievement in Inner City Private Schools* 37

Chapter 7 *Factors Influencing School Effectiveness* 45

Chapter 8 *The Future of Inner City Private Schools* 53

FOREWORD

By Virgil C. Blum, S.J.*

The emergence of inner city private schools as islands of hope in the poorest areas of the nation's urban landscape may be one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of modern urban education. These schools, though their very existence is precarious, have remained in the hearts of the American cities, embracing and serving generations of minority group children — the children of wave after wave of immigrants struggling to make their way in an alien country. With miniscule resources, these schools have undertaken tasks that have daunted and defeated many educators in the public sector. They are a vital alternative to the public sector, which has failed to provide quality education to those groups most desperately in need of a way to break out of the vicious and seemingly endless cycle of illiteracy, unemployability and welfare dependency.

The record of these inner city private schools, which have been too long ignored and neglected,

*Rev. Virgil C. Blum, S.J., who designed and supervised this inner-city education research project, is professor emeritus of political science, Marquette University, and president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, 1100 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233.

amounts to little less than a miracle in the heart of our central cities.

A preliminary study of Milwaukee's St. Leo School, which is now 98 per cent black, indicated the degree to which these alternative schools can achieve levels of success almost undreamed of by their counterparts in the public sector.

In 1980, an analysis of seventh graders at St. Leo's found that in several key areas the students were actually functioning above the national norm, while in other subjects dramatic progress had been made to correct severe education deficiencies the students had brought with them to St. Leo's. The study of St. Leo's convinced the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights that unless research was done on a wider scale, it would be impossible to assess the educational impact these schools have had — and the impact state or federal assistance might have — on the education of children in the inner city.

After the defeat of the Packwood-Moynihan tuition tax credit bill in 1978, Denis P. Doyle of the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in *Phi Delta Kappan* (Sept., 1980): "As the possibility of public support becomes ever more real, it will be necessary to undertake systematic research to begin to assess the probable impact of such funding . . . Although research cannot answer the political question about the appropriateness of public support, it can help in weighing the impact of different options."

Although James S. Coleman, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, and Andrew M. Greeley, professor of sociology at the University of Arizona in Tucson, were conducting a study of Catholic secondary schools, no in-depth study of Catholic and other inner city private elementary schools had ever been undertaken. So the Catholic League undertook such a study with the support of a grant from a private foundation.

With Thomas B. Taft, associate professor of education at Marquette University, serving as consultant, the Catholic League staff developed questionnaires to be completed by parents, teachers and principals of randomly selected inner city private schools. Sixty-four schools were selected in eight cities for the study, all of which are Title I schools and at least 70 percent minority. Fifty-four of the selected schools cooperated with the League by administering the questionnaires to parents, teachers and principals. Data collected by the League was for the academic year 1978-79.

The analysis of the computer data was done by James G. Cibulka, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Timothy J. O'Brien, adjunct assistant professor of political science at Marquette University, and Donald Zewe, S.J., associate professor of sociology at LeMoyne College.

Two highly regarded educational research scholars were engaged to critique the study: Donald A. Erickson, director of the Institute for the Study of Private Schools and professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of California — Los Angeles, and Thomas Vitullo-Martin, director of Metroconomy, Inc., a New York research and consulting firm.

Professor Erickson wrote in his critique: "This remarkable document will provide much grist for discussion and further research . . . The sponsors of the study deserve much credit. They have produced an unprecedented body of data on a subject that federal and state educational agencies, universities, and individual education researchers have scandalously avoided. It is discouraging that educational research, a purportedly scientific endeavor, is still so biased and distorted by loyalty to an established institution (the public school) that the obvious

successes of the inner city private schools are ignored, apparently in the hope that their embarrassing message will not be noticed."

Professor Erickson concluded his critique by observing: "This report may be sufficiently compelling to jar the world of educational research out of its ludicrous avoidance of these remarkable schools in inner cities — where American education in general has most dramatically failed."

Thomas Vitullo-Martin, in his critique of the study, wrote: "Overall, the book is a solid contribution to the field. Speaking as the author of *the* previous book on inner city schools, I can attest that there is virtually nothing published that describes these private schools and examines who teaches in them, who attends them, how well they serve their educational objectives, and how well they serve the communities in which they are located."

Prior to this study, it may have been possible for some to dismiss the remarkable success of St. Leo's School as an aberration or an exception to the general rule for private schools. But our study exhaustively documents the fact that St. Leo's is far from being an isolated phenomenon. Rather, we found that St. Leo's students, teachers and families were typical of those associated with inner city private elementary schools in other major cities. Compared with students in other inner city schools, children in our sample of private schools achieve relatively high scores in national achievement tests; religious and lay teachers, though poorly paid, are highly motivated; and a high proportion of the families with children in these schools make great sacrifices to provide quality education for their children.

The "unprecedented body of data" compiled in our study, to quote Professor Erickson, will reveal to the reader why inner city private elementary schools

have such phenomenal success in motivating children to achieve at an exceptional level in learning the basics of quality education.

This summary does not always do justice to the depth or complexity of the research and analysis, but with our limited space that was not possible. I urge all serious students of educational issues to refer to the complete report for more details and explanations of the methodology used by the researchers on this project.

The complete Catholic League investigation, *Inner City Private Elementary Schools: A Study,* is available from the Marquette University Press, 1324 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233, at $11.95 per copy.

Chapter 1

The Schools and Their Clients

Almost from their beginnings in the early nineteenth century, inner city private schools have educated the children of whatever ethnic or racial group happened to be the minority of that period. Their present clientele is primarily poor black and Hispanic families. Over the years, the names of the minority groups have changed — Irish and Germans, Poles and Italians, blacks and Puerto Ricans — but their needs and their struggles to win a place in American society have remained largely the same.

The first Catholic schools in America date back to the earliest days of the colonial era, and their original students were descended from the handful of English Catholic colonists. After 1800, however, new immigrant families so greatly outnumbered the families of English descent that the parish schools became identified as institutions for Irish and German immigrants, eventually acquiring the character of an alternate school system for Catholic immigrant minorities in a predominantly Protestant country. Among non-English speaking immigrants, building a parish school was an attempt to preserve both their native language and culture.

Between 1890 and 1916 the schools were faced with

the challenge of absorbing massive influxes of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe — a flood that slowed with the outbreak of the First World War and the imposition of strict immigration quotas. This period — between the two world wars — in a sense gave the schools a breathing spell and a chance to reorient their teaching to a changing population. It is interesting to note that 45 percent of the inner city private schools in the study were founded during this period.

A Period of Growth

The years following the Second World War ushered the schools into a dramatically new era, with the post-war baby boom turning both public and private education into a tremendous growth industry. In these post-war years, Catholics, as a group, experienced a striking change in their social class position. By the 1960s, they were no longer typically blue-collar ethnics, but were to be found in every strata of the nation's population. One of their number had even been elected president. Parochial schools grew rapidly in this period. The number of children enrolled in private kindergartens and elementary schools rose from 2.3 million to 5.4 million. Of the schools in our study, 33 percent were founded during this period.

But the migration of the nation's urban population after World War II set the stage for dramatic changes in the population of the inner city private schools in this study. The magnitude of this movement of people is seldom fully appreciated. Catholics, sharing in the post-war affluence, joined in the vast migration of urban dwellers, leaving behind them in the inner city areas half-emptied churches and parish schools. During the same period, there occurred a massive migration of blacks, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans into the nation's larger cities, displacing the departing whites in the inner cities. In the Northeast, Midwest and far West, parish schools located in what

were becoming the new urban ghettos were faced with a basic change in the kinds of families residing in their areas.

Although the presence of children from minority families in inner city private schools has been widely recognized, thus far no systematic description of the family backgrounds of these pupils has been published. The data gathered by the Catholic League enable us to begin to fill this gap; to begin to locate the school population in the structure of American society, to examine the validity of some stereotyped images of families using the schools, and to identify some family background characteristics which may influence the performance of the children in the schools.

Each of the 54 schools selected for this study had to have at least 70 percent minority group enrollment as a prerequisite for selection. Thus, this report describes a particular segment of inner city private schools, and its findings may not necessarily apply to all private schools located in inner cities. Among the 54 schools selected, blacks comprised 56 percent of the families. The second largest group is Hispanics, who make up about 31 percent of the families. White families make up only 8 percent of the total enrollment, while other ethnic groups account for 5 percent of the enrollment. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

Racial/Ethnic Background of Families Using Target Inner City Private Schools

Racial/Ethnic Background	Percentage
Black	56%
Hispanic	31%
White	8%
Other	5%

n = 3995 minus 42 missing cases

Black families predominated in the schools located in Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Chicago and Milwaukee, where they accounted for more than 85 percent of the student bodies; Hispanics predominated in New York and Los Angeles.

The private schools in this study successfully charge tuition to educate children in poor, inner city neighborhoods. This statement, surprising enough in itself, is even more striking in light of the study's analysis of family income. The study found that 15 percent of the families of children in the inner city private schools report an annual income of less than $5,000. They are genuinely poor. Another 35 percent of the families had an income in the $5,000 to $10,000 range, which indicates a living standard at or just above the poverty level; 22 percent of the families had an income in the $10,000 to $15,000 range, while 29 percent reported incomes of $15,000 or more.

The clientele of these schools have a significantly lower level of income than the population of the country as a whole. While 35 percent of all American families have an income of less than $15,000, 72 percent of the inner city private school families report incomes of under $15,000. (See Table 2.)

Making Ends Meet

Despite the financial strain of making do on a low income while paying for private school tuition, the majority of the families in the study (51 percent) have only a single wage earner. More than a third of the families in the study (35 percent) are single parent families, and in most instances it is a working mother raising a family alone. In only 22 percent of the families are there two full-time wage earners.

The ability and willingness of genuinely poor families to meet the cost of tuition at private inner city schools is one of the most remarkable findings of the study. Tuition charges at these schools range from $200

TABLE 2

Family Income of Target Private School Families and All U.S. Families

Income Levels	Private School Families	All U.S. Families[1]
Under $5,000	15%	9%
$5,000 - $9,999	35%	18%
$10,000 - $14,999	22%	19%
$15,000 - $19,999	14%	18%
$20,000 or more	14%	36%

n = 3995 minus 295 (7.4%) missing cases.

[1]Based on Table 729: Families—Per Cent Distribution by Money Income Level in 1977 Dollars, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 452.

to $800 a year, with a median charge of $399.50. In addition, many of these schools require substantial involvement in fund-raising activities.

To many people, $400 may not seem like a lot of money. But it is clearly a substantial burden when one considers that one-half of the inner city private school families report an income of less than $10,000 and that the alternative is tuitionless (free) public education.

But even given the level of sacrifice entailed in sending their children to these schools, a majority (55 percent) of the families in the schools have more than one child attending inner city private schools.

Such sacrifice is further underscored by the finding that 63 percent of the families with an income of less than $5,000 pay $300 or more to send their children to private schools. In the group of families with incomes between $5,000 and $10,000, that figure rises to 81 percent who pay $300 or more for tuition. The willingness of poor families to spend this much money

for tuition is a firm indicator of the value they place on the quality of education they believe their children receive.

A charge that is frequently levelled against private schools in the inner city is that they tend to skim the best and brightest youngsters from the inner city populations, stripping this layer of talent from the ranks of public school children. The charge is also made that the families of these inner city private school children themselves make up the educational elite of the inner city.

Parents' Educational Backgrounds

Addressing itself to this issue, the study undertook a detailed examination of the educational backgrounds of the parents. The study found indications of modest educational superiority on the part of inner city private school parents. For example, 37 percent of black parents had some college education, compared with a national rate of 23 percent among blacks aged 25 to 34. In contrast, the educational level of white parents was found to be lower than the national average, with 42 percent reporting less than 12 years of education, compared with 18 percent among whites aged 25 to 34 nationally. The study also found indications that Hispanic parents with children in inner city private schools are better educated than the national average for young Mexican-American adults — even though their educational levels are below those of black and Oriental parents of inner city private school children. (See Table 3.)

Two-fifths of the black parents who entered college graduated from college. Hispanics had both the smallest percentage of parents who entered college and of those, the smallest proportion of those who successfully completed college. Fifteen percent of Hispanics began college and only three-tenths of those managed to graduate.

We contend that it is the parents who began college, but for one reason or another did not graduate, who tend to be strongly and uniquely motivated to secure the best education they can for their children. As one mother phrased it: "I am hungry for my little girl to succeed in a way that mothers who finished college aren't."

Despite the findings of modest educational superiority, the differences that exist are relatively small and there is considerable overlap. Thus, the data do not support the image of inner city private schools skimming off the cream of all better educated families and leaving only the milk for inner city public schools.

TABLE 3

Years of Schooling Completed by Target Inner City Private School Parents and All U.S. Adults

Years of Schooling Completed	Private School Parents	All U.S. Adults[1]
Less than 8th grade	9%	11%
Completed 8th grade	5%	9%
Some high school	16%	15%
Completed high school	34%	36%
Some college	22%	13%
Completed college	15%	15%
Total	101%[2]	99%[2]

n = 3995 with 34 missing cases.

[1]Table 226, Years of School Completed by Race and Sex, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 143.

[2]Total is greater/less than 100% due to rounding.

Chapter 2

Parental Demand for Inner City Private Schools

Our findings tend to support the observation that black parents choose private schools in the expectation that their children will receive a better education there than in public schools. That is especially the case with well-educated minority families.

For many minorities who cannot afford to move to the suburbs or out of the inner city, the inner city private schools have become a functional alternative to quality suburban schools.

In addition to the charge that inner city private school families constitute an elite strata of the inner city, the claim is often also made that parents are motivated primarily by religious and sectarian concerns.

This allegation impinges directly on the issue of separation of church and state because if such schools fulfill a predominantly sectarian role, some argue, then public support for them is neither constitutional nor politically appropriate. Equally objectionable to some critics is the presumption that parents are attracted to inner city private schools as a matter of family tradition. Again, this implies the existence of an elite group developed and reinforced through such schools. According to this view, the attractiveness of private

schools has less to do with overt curriculum or academic quality than with the hidden curriculum which cultivates social class distinction.

Still another charge levelled against the schools is that the parents who utilize them value public schools less as an important institution in American society; that they are less willing to support public schools with tax dollars; that they are more inclined to flee the social demands placed on public schools, such as desegregation.

None of these conventional preconceptions stands up under analysis. In fact, the emergence of inner city private schools serving poor minority populations requires the rethinking of a host of stereotypes that have hitherto been applied to private schools.

Parents Seek Quality Education

Nearly 4,000 parents in 54 elementary schools completed a questionnaire that sought to measure the reasons they had chosen to send their children to private schools. They were asked to rate the importance of various policies and programs, the quality of their children's schools and other relevant information.

Using sophisticated statistical analyses, our researchers found that parents place strong emphasis on the educational quality of private schools and that they can distinguish clearly between educational quality and the religious element of the schools. In fact, the researchers found that the desire for quality education, as measured by responses to various questions in the survey, seems to form a distinct and separate motive from the desire for religious and moral education. This is not to say that religious or moral values go unrecognized by the respondents. Seventy-eight percent strongly agreed that religion classes are important and 94 per cent strongly agreed that learning moral values is essential. The point is that parents value quality education apart from religion,

whether explicitly or implicitly.

Another interesting, and related, finding is that although the schools themselves are overwhelmingly Catholic in their affiliation, nearly one-third — 31 percent — of the students are Protestants, while 2 percent listed themselves as having no church membership. Among blacks, however, the proportion of non-Catholics is even higher — with 53 percent reporting that they are Protestant. The vast majority of whites and Hispanics are Catholics. (See Table 4).

TABLE 4

Racial/Ethnic Groups by Religious Affiliation of Families Using Target Private Inner City Schools

Religious Affiliation	Racial/Ethnic Group			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other[1]
Catholic	44%	98%	92%	82%
Protestant	53%	2%	6%	6%
No Affiliation	3%	—	2%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	2189	1254	302	178

n = 3995 minus 72 missing cases.

[1]Other includes Orientals and a small percentage of Native Americans.

The survey also found that the families of inner city private school children attend church less regularly than traditional parochial school families. Only 54 percent report attending church weekly; 21 percent say they attend once a month and 25 percent report they attend church either less than once a month or not at all.

Although previous studies have suggested that attendance at Catholic schools was, in fact, a matter of family tradition, the emergence of inner city private schools has altered that pattern drastically.

Only 14 percent of the parents in our sample had attended private schools exclusively, while another 19 percent had attended both public and private schools. Two-thirds of the parents in our study, then, were found to be exclusive products of public education. These findings clearly invalidate the notion that private school attendance, at least in the inner city, is part of a family tradition spanning generations.

Attitudes Toward Public Schools

The data also tend to refute the idea that parents choose inner city private schools because they are hostile to public schools. Roughly a third of the parents surveyed were found to be neutral to positive toward the public schools, while an equal number were found to have negative attitudes toward public schools. Between these two poles were two smaller groups. One of those groups was generally negative except that its members acknowledged that public schools are willing to take parents' suggestions; the other group tended to be neutral except for their belief that public schools do not teach moral values.

The survey found that even those who are extremely positive in their attitudes toward private school are not necessarily negative toward public schools. In fact, 79 percent of those parents were found to have neutral or positive attitudes toward public schools. Clearly, some parents fit the stereotype of being pro-private school and anti-public school, but a greater number do not.

What the survey does show is that most inner city parents chose private schools not because of a bias against public schools, but because of positive attitudes toward the education offered in the schools of their choice. In fact, if those who did not answer the questions are removed from the sample, three out of four of the parents gave pro-private school reasons while only one-fifth said they sent their children to

private schools because of negative attitudes toward public schools.

The data of our survey clearly found that the primary reason these parents chose private schools was quality education. The secondary reason was quality education that also included religious and moral values.

In short, inner city private school parents made their choice not because they view public schools as being bad, but because they see private schools as being much better.

One of the best apparent explanations for parental choice is that private school officials are perceived by the parents as being responsive to the preferences of parents. This includes the inclination of officials to act according to the preferences of the parents, even when those preferences are not explicitly expressed, because they share common attitudes toward school issues.

Chapter 3

Administration of Inner City Private Schools

There are a number of reasons to believe that inner city private schools can be more responsive than public schools. The public schools, by their nature, must serve diverse constituencies and have therefore long favored standardization as a way of protecting themselves from the criticism that one group or another is receiving unfair treatment. Similarly, the role of public schools as agents of cultural assimilation for ethnic and racial minorities has caused them to resist individualization and local autonomy.

By contrast, private schools, also by their very nature, are able to be far more responsive. They hold no funding monopoly and are, to an important extent, directly dependent on parental tuition subsidies. Moreover, many of the schools remain affiliated with local parishes which retain considerable autonomy. Equally important, each parish school sees itself as responding to the particular needs of its neighborhood and student population. To a large extent, the schools are characterized by both administrative and political decentralization. Free of the impediments in the public sector, the inner city private schools are more likely to share parental aspirations and to respond to parental demands.

This was, in fact, what the study found to be the case.

Our data suggest a very strong consensus exists between parents and staff on key program emphasis at the schools — including moral instruction, religious education and the teaching of racial history. There is evidence of strong agreement about the core mission of these schools, a consensus which is absent in many, if not most, public schools.

The requirement in many schools of active parental participation and involvement in school activities also appears to foster among parents an exceptional loyalty to the school and a willingness to make extraordinary sacrifices on its behalf. While the parents in our sample are extremely committed to their child's education, there can be no doubt that this commitment is greatly reinforced by the open climate in these schools.

The Role of Principals

The inner city private schools have been able to flourish with the sharply decentralized authority structure, partly because of the strong bonds of consensus linking the teachers, administrators, parishes and parents. The role of principals in the inner city private schools is substantially different from that of their counterparts in the public schools. Unburdened by layers of administrative and bureaucratic overhead, the principals can take a far more active and intimate role in the operations of the schools and in the relations with the children. Many of the principals know each child personally, an accomplishment which is possible because the schools are small (the median enrollment is 300, the largest is 600).

It would, in fact, be correct to characterize the atmosphere in most schools we visited as that of an extended family, with the principal as the chief role model in his or her interaction with the children.

The second observation one makes about the administration of these schools is that the teaching staff works closely with the administration. Again, the schools' small size facilitates such relationships. Originally, these close relationships had their roots in the strengths of the teaching orders. In schools operated by these orders, the position of principal has traditionally rotated among staff members. Even though this practice no longer prevails in most schools, it has perpetuated a collegial style of administration characterized by a sharing of responsibility and influence. This style of school leadership helps explain why, despite the low salaries, 74 percent of the teachers surveyed strongly agreed with the statement that their work is fulfilling and satisfying. Eighty-two percent described their principal as sympathetic and supportive, and only 8 percent described themselves as hindered by incompetent administration. Ninety percent of the teachers reported being consulted in decision making.

Chapter 4

Teachers in Inner City Private Schools

The Catholic League took a long look at the teaching staffs of these schools — the men and women who continue to teach there despite wages that are sometimes only half of what they could earn in the public schools.

The inner city private schools in our study are staffed by a combination of lay teachers, teaching nuns and brothers. The vast majority — 88 percent — are women, most of them being lay women. Lay women make up about 61 percent of the teaching staff; teaching nuns, about 27 percent; male lay teachers, 10 percent; and teaching brothers, 2 percent. (See Table 5.)

The majority of the teachers are also white; blacks account for 31 percent of the teaching staff. Hispanic teachers make up only 6 percent of the teaching staff. (In some cities studied, the proportion of white teachers was much higher than the national average. In New York, they comprised 84 percent; in Newark, 86 percent; in Milwaukee, 89 percent. In contrast, white teachers made up only bare majorities in Los Angeles and Chicago, and were in the minority in New Orleans, where they comprised only 12 percent of the teaching staff.) (See Tables 6 and 7.)

TABLE 5

Lay/Religious Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools by Cities

City	Lay	Religious	Totals
New York	71%	29%	(92)
Newark	64%	36%	(14)
Washington	50%	50%	(20)
New Orleans	80%	20%	(41)
Chicago	84%	16%	(63)
Milwaukee	53%	47%	(19)
Los Angeles	68%	32%	(71)
All Cities	71%	29%	(320)

n = 339 minus 19 missing cases.

Parentheses contain absolute numbers.

TABLE 6

Racial/Ethnic Origins of Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools

Racial/Ethnic Group	Percentage
White	61%
Black	31%
Hispanic	6%
Others	2%
Totals	100%

n = 339 minus 5 missing cases.

TABLE 7

Racial/Ethnic Background of Religious/Lay Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools

Racial/Ethnic Background	Religious	Lay
White	75%	54%
Black	11%	38%
Hispanic	8%	5%
Others	5%	3%
Total	99% (98)	100% (235)

n = 339 minus 6 missing cases.

Parentheses contain absolute numbers.

When the schools that are most heavily populated by black students were analyzed, however, a significant pattern emerged. Among those schools, blacks tended to make up a large part of the faculty. They comprise more than 66 percent of the teaching staff in about one-third of the heavily black schools, from 33 to 66 percent of the teaching staff in about half of the heavily black schools, and less than a third of the teaching staff in only three of the 18 schools. Thus, in the predominantly black inner city private schools, the need for black teachers to reach black pupils effectively, and to provide them with adult role models of academic success, appears to be reasonably well-satisfied. (See Table 8.)

Teachers in inner city private schools have credentials comparable to those of public school teachers, although the two sectors make use of credentials in different ways. Inner city private schools tend to rely on academic degrees as a prerequisite for hiring and to play down state certification; public schools rely on state certification as a prerequisite for

TABLE 8

Balance of Black Teachers and Pupils in Target Inner-City Private Schools by Cities

City	Teachers	Pupils
New York	9%	26%
Newark	14%	40%
Washington	32%	99%
Chicago	46%	85%
Milwaukee	11%	92%
New Orleans	85%	100%
Los Angeles	23%	29%

hiring and reward advanced degrees with salary increments.

The great majority — 71 percent — of the inner city private school teachers report that they have a bachelor's degree. Another 10 percent report that they have degrees characterized as "other." We used teacher certification as a criterion to determine which of those reporting "other" degrees have the equivalent of at least a bachelor's degree. Based on this criterion, slightly more than half of those degrees characterized as "other" are bona fide bachelor's degrees.

When "others" are added to the reported bachelor's degrees, the total reaches 77 percent. An additional 19 percent reported having master's degrees. Thus, a total of 96 percent of the inner city private school teachers have a college or graduate degree. (See Table 9.)

The level of state certification among the teachers is also reasonably high. Sixty percent of the teachers report being presently certified, and another 31 percent have, in their judgment, met all the requirements for certification, though they have not been formally certified. Since certification is generally not needed to teach in these private schools, many qualified teachers

TABLE 9

Educational Attainment of Religious and Lay Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools

Highest Degree	Religious	Lay
Less than BA/BS	3%	5%
BA/BS or equivalent	58%	84%
MA/MS	39%	11%
Total	100%	100%
n	(95)	(217)

n = 339 minus 26 missing cases.

apparently do not bother to secure it. Overall, 87 percent of inner city private school teachers are certified or consider themselves certifiable. (See Tables 10 and 11.)

For teachers, the amount of classroom experience is a pragmatic test for competence. Extensive teaching experience is, at rock bottom, a measure of the teachers' survival in the profession and, at optimum, a measure of accumulated wisdom and knowledge. In addition, extensive faculty teaching experience is an indication of each school's stability and continuity. On the other hand, new, recently trained teachers can be a source of fresh ideas and innovation.

Surprisingly, almost half — 43 percent — of the teachers in the inner city private schools in our sample are comparatively recent entrants into the field, reporting less than five years of classroom experience. In fact, about 11 percent were in their first year of teaching. About 17 percent of inner city private school teachers have been in the classroom for five to 10 years, and about 40 percent have had at least 10 years of teaching experience. The data, unfortunately, do not reveal how many teachers have more than 10 years' experience.

TABLE 10

Certification of Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools by Cities

Cities	Certified	Certifiable	Not Certified
New York	67%	20%	13%
Newark	75%	17%	8%
Washington	33%	61%	6%
New Orleans	59%	34%	7%
Chicago	55%	39%	6%
Milwaukee	74%	21%	5%
Los Angeles	52%	36%	12%
All Cities	59%	31%	10%

n = 339 minus 30 missing cases.

TABLE 11

Certification of Lay and Religious Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools

	Religious	Lay
Certified	64%	58%
Certifiable	33%	30%
Not Certified	3%	12%
Totals	100%	100%
n	(94)	(233)

n = 339 minus 12 missing cases.

Not surprisingly, the teaching nuns and brothers have, as a group, spent far more years in the classroom than their lay colleagues. About three-fourths of the teaching nuns and brothers have more than 10 years of

teaching experience, which compares with only about one-fourth of the lay teachers. Conversely, more than half — 56 percent — of the lay teachers have less than five years' experience. (See Table 12.)

TABLE 12

Teaching Experience of Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools by Religious/Lay Status

Years of Teaching	Religious	Lay
Less than 5	11%	56%
5-10	14%	18%
More than 10	75%	27%
Totals	100%	101%[1]
n	(94)	(233)

n = 339 minus 12 missing cases.

[1]Total exceeds 100 percent due to rounding.

These findings strongly support the hypothesis that religious and lay teachers contribute in different ways to these schools. Members of teaching orders, because of their greater teaching experience and longer tenure in their present schools, contribute to the stability and continuity of the schools, while the relatively less experienced lay teachers contribute more to innovation. Minority group teachers are about as likely to be veteran, experienced teachers as are the white teachers, which suggests that teachers in these schools have just about completed the transition from an earlier stage of educating white, ethnic poor to their current stage of educating black and Hispanic poor. Minority teachers appear to fit the role, not of inexperienced innovators on the faculties of the schools, but of minority group members who help adapt the teaching methods to meet the needs of minority group children. (See Table 13.)

TABLE 13

Teaching Experience of Teachers in Target Inner City Private Schools by Racial/Ethnic Groups

Years of Teaching	White	Black	Hispanic and Others
Less than 5	39%	49%	39%
5-10	16%	16%	29%
More than 10	45%	35%	32%
Totals	100%	100%	100%
n	(193)	(96)	(28)

n = 339 minus 69 missing cases.

Numbers in parentheses are absolute numbers.

Not surprisingly, the teachers in the inner city private schools are predominantly — 83 percent — Catholic, with the remainder reporting religious identification as follows: 8 percent Baptist, 4 percent Lutheran, 5 percent identifying other deonminations, and 1 percent reporting no religious identification. The high percentage of Catholic teachers reflects the fact that the majority of the inner city private schools are under Catholic auspices. Of the black teachers, three-fifths are Catholic, which is surprisingly high considering that only 7 percent of American blacks are Catholic. Schools with Catholic sponsorship seem quite successful in maintaining their religious identity by means of black Catholic teachers. (See Table 14.)

Our study also sought to measure the attitudes and values of the teachers in the schools. What, for example, are their dreams for the schools? Why do they stay, despite substandard wages?

An analysis of the responses to the questionnaires found that the most important factor for teachers was what we called "positive and constructive work

relations at school," a category that included student cooperation, parental interest in the students' education, parental supervision of homework, parental trust in teachers' judgment, good behavior of the students and their enjoyment of learning, and competence and understanding on the part of administrators.

The findings tend to reinforce the generally good morale we found among teachers. The strength of this factor also supports another position we had arrived at independently, namely, that it is intrinsic job satisfaction rather than money which keeps these teachers at inner city private schools.

Religious and Moral Values

Another important factor for the teachers is the milieu of religious and moral values emphasized in the inner city private schools. A vast majority of the teachers agreed that religious and moral instruction is essential.

It is significant, we believe, that the religious and strong moral atmosphere of the inner city private schools is the second most important factor in the opinion of the teachers. But it appears far less important than the first factor — positive and constructive working environment — in the attitude of the teachers.

The analysis also revealed that teachers are acutely aware of the inadequacy of their salaries. At the same time, they deny being overburdened with extra tasks. We called this "the dilemma of teaching Christian values for inadequate pay." This relationship between a commitment to teaching Christian values and an awareness of their inadequate salaries is intriguing. It could point either to sacrifice cheerfully borne or to teachers who are contemplating leaving. One possible interpretation is that inner city private school teachers are affirming the importance of teaching religious and moral values even at the cost of

inadequate salaries; another possible interpretation is that these two ideas balance uneasily in the teachers' minds as they consider the move to a better paying public school with different values.

It seems clear, however, that these teachers do not work primarily for money. For the time being at least, their salaries enable them to teach in the schools of their choice. Concern with the inadequacy of the remuneration, however, is coupled with a concern that they may no longer be able to afford to teach Christian values in the inner city private schools.

Chapter 5

The Egalitarian versus Elitist Controversy

Whether inner city private schools are exclusive or egalitarian can perhaps best be determined by the way they go about selecting student bodies through admissions and expulsions. As we have seen, the question of elitism is actually much broader, but the more specific question of the selectivity and exclusivity of the schools is obviously central to any judgment about their alleged elitism. The kind of students who are admitted to such schools helps us understand a great deal about any claims the schools make about being successful and the justifiability of public support that naturally flows from such claims.

While private school officials must exercise some degree of selectivity in their schools in order for the schools to survive and succeed, they have more than one avenue available to them to shape a selective educational environment. One option, of course, is to be exclusive by eliminating certain pupils, either through admissions policies or expulsions.

The alternative is for them to emphasize socialization in an attempt to create a distinctive educational environment. This latter approach, of trying to create a *distinctive* rather than an *exclusive* educational environment, is obviously a far more egalitarian way

of dealing with the problem of selectivity.

As this study demonstrates, inner city private schools show only a modest propensity toward admission selectivity and almost no selectivity through expulsions. Rather, by emphasizing socialization, the schools are trying to create a distinctive educational environment through meeting the needs of their student bodies head-on.

Obviously, given their restricted resources, the private schools cannot be "all things to all people." Without some type of admissions standards private schools could neither maintain a distinctive climate nor shape a desirable educational product. What is seldom recognized, however, is that schools can be distinctive without being exclusive.

Religious Affiliation

Even though many of the schools in our study are church-affiliated, we found that the schools were almost evenly split on the matter of giving preference to children with a certain religious affiliation. This was true for first time enrollees and for transfers from public schools. Because religious affiliation is not closely associated with class or racial status, it obviously should not be treated as an exclusionary policy, in any event.

Leaving aside the question of religious affiliation, roughly one-fourth of the schools in our survey used no admissions criteria whatever. Other selection criteria, in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned, are the child's academic ability, the parents' motivation, the child's behavior, and the perceived motivation of the child. The least frequently mentioned criterion was the family's standing in the community or neighborhood. (See Table 14.)

The data of our study indicate that parental motivation is the criterion foremost in the minds of school officials, both for first time enrollees and for

TABLE 14

Most Important Admissions Criteria in Target Inner City Private Schools

Criterion	Percent of schools using this criterion for first-time enrollees in school	Percent of schools using this criterion for transfers from public schools
Child's academic ability.....	17%	21%
Child's motivation for learning.....	20%	21%
Child's behavior in neighborhood	6%	15%
Parents' attitudes and commitment to child's education	51%	42%
Recommendations of friends/relatives who know the child	0%	0%
Family's standing in neighborhood	2%	0%

n = 32. Remaining schools use no admissions criteria.

public school transfers. This suggests that in their admission decisions, officials are concerned primarily with the parental support they can count on, including fund raising efforts, support for the school's educational objectives, support for the child's educational development and staff assistance.

But what of the perception that private schools are often havens for parents fleeing from school integration? Although it should be noted that the schools in our survey are predominantly minority in the first place, our survey found that principals have made a conscious attempt to screen out individuals who are

seeking to escape desegregation in the public schools. During initial interviews with the parents, there is extensive discussion of the parents' reasons for selecting a private school. According to the principals, such screening is not foolproof, but it is usually effective.

Primarily because of resource constraints, there is some truth in the claim that the inner city private schools do tend to exclude children with special handicaps. In most cases, principals reported that they simply could not afford the special education teachers or equipment to serve these children.

Transfers Welcomed

But perhaps the most striking finding of our survey was the degree to which the inner city private schools opened their doors to public school transfers, even in cases where the transfers were clearly not the most desirable or ideal students.

The survey found that a vast majority (80 percent) of the schools reported that they accepted academically weak transfers frequently or sometimes. This tendency is less pronounced among pupils with discipline problems, but a majority (56 percent) of the schools reported they accepted such transfers frequently or sometimes. (See Table 15.)

This evidence — that private schools often accept pupils with learning or disciplinary problems — lends credence to our major theme: that the schools are egalitarian rather than elitist institutions. In our comparisons of private and public schools, it is clear that each school works with some pupils which the other kind of school cannot or will not serve.

This conclusion would, however, clearly be invalid if the private schools relied heavily on expulsions to weed out problem students who had been admitted under the remarkably open admissions policies.

In fact, our study found that this practice was not

TABLE 15

Frequency of Acceptance of Problem Pupils in Target Inner City Private Schools

Acceptance Rate	Academically Weak Transfers	Discipline-Problem Transfers
Frequently	32%	6%
Sometimes	48%	50%
Seldom	14%	30%
Never	6%	14%

n = 50. Missing data on 4 schools.

employed by the schools in our sample. In 1977 (the last year for which complete data were available at the time our survey was circulated in 1979) fully 61 percent of the schools expelled not a single student. The pattern for the previous three years, 1974 to 1976, was very similar.

Those schools which did report expulsions usually were found to have expelled only one student and in no case more than two in any year. In the four-year period, only four schools reported removing as many as five students, but these were clearly exceptional cases.

Overall, the inner city private schools were found to exercise even less "screening out" through expulsions than through admissions. (See Table 16.)

How then do these schools maintain standards of performance which permit them to carry out a distinctive mission?

Like all organizations which choose not to be too exclusive, the inner city private schools have taken on the goal of attempting to shape the behavior and attitudes of their pupils. Some organizations shape behavior primarily through the use of informal norms,

TABLE 16

Expulsion Rates in Target
Inner City Private Schools

Year	Percent of Schools with No Expulsions
1977	61% (42)
1976	74% (35)
1975	60% (35)
1974	88% (32)

Parentheses indicate number of schools with data available for that year.

while others rely more heavily on rules. The schools in our study were found to employ both methods.

As we reported earlier, there exists in the private schools a broad and powerful consensus over goals and policies between the schools and the parents. There is a strong element of parental involvement and commitment to excellence. Both the parents and the school staff place a heavy emphasis on the child's acquisition of reading and writing skills, and both parents and teachers try to challenge the child to do his or her best.

Our survey found that 62 percent of the principals said their schools place a strong emphasis on discipline. But the schools also showed a marked sensitivity to contemporary social needs. Nearly 66 percent of the principals also reported an emphasis in the school's curriculum on ethnic and racial issues.

The strong involvement of parents in the education of their children also constitutes an important, if not central, factor in this process of socialization. Seventy-seven percent of the parents in our survey reported that the school encouraged their suggestions and 71 percent reported that the school *requires* their involvement.

Perhaps most important, 95 percent of the parents report that they are treated by the school as if their opinion matters. (See Table 17.)

TABLE 17

Parents' Perception of Personal Treatment by Target Inner City Private Schools

I am treated as if . . .	Percent Responding	
My opinion matters	95%	(3667)
Officials listen but don't care	4.4%	(171)
I am unwelcome	0.6%	(22)
I don't belong in the school	0.4%	(14)

n = 3995 minus 121 missing cases.

Parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

We emphasize this perception on the part of the parents because it appears to characterize the close-knit environment in such schools where the children are well known by each staff member and where parental expectations and opinions are treated with respect. This personal dimension of sharing appears to be what is distinctive about all of the schools in our sample and what makes their "socializing" role so effective.

It is important to understand that a policy of trying to mold and influence attitude and behavior rather than relying on a policy of exclusive admissions and expulsions is a far more difficult and demanding task. It requires a higher level of commitment on the part of both school officials and parents. But it is a policy which reflects the egalitarian and open traditions of the schools.

Chapter 6

Behavior and Achievement in Inner City Private Schools

What then has been the actual experience of these schools in terms both of social behavior and of academic performance?

For measuring student behavior, we relied primarily on second-party observations, either from parents, teachers or the principal. These were supplemented with first-person accounts from students drawn from interviews we conducted while making observations in the schools themselves.

Based on responses provided by 47 schools, none of them apparently has an attendance problem, as measured by overall absentee rates. In fact, 87 percent report an absentee rate of less than 5 percent. Only six schools had an absentee rate of between 5 percent and 10 percent, and none reported absentee rates higher than 10 percent.

When teachers were asked whether they perceived their students to be well behaved, 42 percent indicated they felt quite strongly that their students were well-behaved, while a larger number — 46 percent — were in partial agreement. Twelve percent expressed either mild or strong disagreement with the statement that their students were well-behaved. (See Table 18.)

When principals were asked whether students were

TABLE 18

Teacher Perception of Whether Students in Target Inner City Private Schools Are Well Behaved

Response	Percent
Strongly agree*	42% (142)
Somewhat agree	46% (154)
Somewhat disagree	10% (33)
Strongly disagree	2% (7)

* that students are well behaved.

n = 339 minus 3 missing cases.

Parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

cooperative, a similar pattern emerged. Fifty-six percent of the principals strongly agreed that students were cooperative, while 40 percent said they somewhat agreed. Principals told us that, because many pupils came from broken or impoverished homes, they came to school without some values which we take for granted among middle-class children. Although the problems are not comparable to those found in the public schools, it is clear that the students in the inner city private schools do not constitute a group of youngsters whose behavior is preternaturally exemplary. Disruptiveness, for example, is not entirely absent from the schools in our sample. Fourteen percent of the principals stated this was a problem.

When we asked principals whether students in their schools respected their fellow students, 36 percent expressed strong agreement. A larger proportion — 60 percent — expressed some agreement with the statement that students respected their fellow students, while only 4 percent said they disagreed. Responses by teachers were roughly in the same proportions.

Again, these responses suggest that private school

officials face significant socialization problems — that the schools are not filled with model pupils from an elite strata of society. But it must be kept in mind that some of these responses may partly reflect the high expectations which teachers and administrators have for these pupils with respect to character development.

But it is clear that there has been some degree of success in dealing with discipline problems in the schools in our sample. The fact that more teachers and principals do not complain of decorum problems may reflect the success the schools have had in creating a stimulating school climate conducive to good behavior.

One 11-year-old student summed up his feeling about his school this way:

"It's really a nice school because they take the time of teaching you and . . . they just don't say, 'I don't care about the kids as long as I get my paycheck' . . . They care about the kids. They take time to tell us when we're wrong and if we're right, they praise you."

That this student is treated with respect obviously is an important explanation for his good behavior.

More than half the parents in the survey reported

TABLE 19

Parents' Perception of Child's Behavior at Home Since Enrolling in Target Inner City Private School

Response	Percent
Greatly improved	35% (1412)
Somewhat improved	32% (1287)
Not changed	28% (1112)
Became worse	4% (139)

n = 3995 minus 139 missing cases.

Parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

some improvement in their child's behavior since enrolling in the private school. The survey also found that 77 percent of the parents strongly agree that their children talk about school in a positive vein, and 73 percent said their children enjoy going to school. The strong overall approval, despite some disagreement, suggests to us that parents truly perceive that the inner city private schools have had a positive impact on the values and attitudes of their children. (See Tables 19, 20 and 21.)

In measuring the progress of students in academic subjects, we found that most of the schools used some kind of standardized tests in tracking performance.*

Because of the diversity of test instruments, we have converted the scores to a common scale of measurement to facilitate comparisons among schools.

TABLE 20

Parents' Perception that the Child Talks Positively About the Target Inner City Private School

Parents' Response	Percent	
Strongly agree	77%	(3034)
Somewhat agree	21%	(830)
Somewhat disagree	2%	(84)
Strongly disagree	.02%	(9)

Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

*At St. Leo School in Milwaukee, records show that fourth graders entered the school scholastically at an average of two years below grade level. Standardized tests administered at the end of the year indicated that the children had progressed to within three months of their expected levels in math and study skills. Other figures showed that 27 of 30 first graders had progressed to a second grade reading level at the end of their first year. In 1980, figures were compiled showing that seventh graders functioned above the national norms in spelling, capitalization and punctuation and within six months of the norm in vocabulary, word usage, mathematical concepts and problem solving.

TABLE 21

Parents' Perception that the Child Has Learned to Read and Write Well in the Target Inner City Private School

Parents' Response	Percent
Strongly agree	72% (2821)
Somewhat agree	26% (1006)
Somewhat disagree	1.5% (60)
Strongly disagree	1.0% (39)

Parentheses indicate absolute numbers.

Our study found a considerable range in the performance of inner city private schools as measured by standardized tests. For example, in measurements of seventh grade reading ability, the median score was 41.8 normal curve equivalent, with the highest performing school at 56.3 and the lowest at 20.5. In math, the median score was 45.8, with the low at 3.7 and the high at 71.9. (See Table 22.)

Naturally the following questions arise: Why the dramatic differences? Are they caused by the backgrounds of the families, the social and economic profiles of the various student bodies? Are they, in short, determined by factors outside of the schools? Or do the schools themselves make a difference?

The answers to these questions have significant implications in a number of areas and impinge directly on the question of whether the inner city private schools in our sample are elitist. If it were determined that the achievement differences were due to variables that were external to the schools, our study would merely reiterate the findings of other studies, such as those by Coleman in 1966 and Christopher Jencks in 1972. Such a finding would have significant reper-

TABLE 22
Achievement Test Score Data

	First Grade	Seventh Grade
Median School Score (Reading)	46.8	41.8
Highest Scoring School (Reading)	67.7	56.3
Lowest Scoring School (Reading)	32.3	20.5
Median School Score (Math)	48.9	45.8
Highest Scoring School (Math)	70.9	71.9
Lowest Scoring School (Math)	29.0	3.7

Scores are reported as normal curve equivalents, with 50 as the national median.

cussions. After all, the debate about private and public school effectiveness centers precisely on the assertion that private schools' superior performance is really illusory because it is merely a product of its upscale student body.

On the other hand, the finding that the schools do, in fact, make a difference would also tend to raise questions about the quality of the low-performing schools. In that case, it would be important to determine whether the schools' failures could be corrected if they had greater resources and a more secure funding base, or whether there is room for improvement even without additional resources.

To help interpret the schools' impact on academic and social behavior, as against the influence of family backgrounds, we utilized regression techniques which examine the variations apparent among students and

schools. These statistical techniques allow us to separate the variables and to weigh them against one another. While the findings that grew out of these analyses cannot be summarized simply, two major conclusions emerged.

Our study of inner city private schools found that background factors *do not* overwhelm the effects of the schools themselves. In other words, even when family backgrounds are considered, the individual schools were found to make a difference.

The data indicate that school factors appear to actually compensate for family background deficits. For example, the data show that the school has the greatest impact on improving behavior for children from poor homes, with rather less impact on those from middle class backgrounds.

Also, it was found that teacher attitudes and experience at a school are important factors in determining whether a school performs well or poorly as measured by the standardized tests. Teacher experience is a factor that can be called "resource sensitive" because it could be affected by funding levels. Some schools have such poor salary scales that they are unable to retain experienced teachers. This finding indicates that, to some extent, the weaker performing schools could improve their performance somewhat if additional money were made available. On the other hand, the study found that the schools retain considerable strengths despite their resource constraints, indicating there is definitely room for improvement even without additional resources.

These findings indicate that public assistance, whether in the form of education vouchers or tuition tax credits, should not be seen as a way of making private schools more effective; rather, this support should be regarded primarily as a means of enhancing the ability of parents to pay escalating tuition, thus increasing the likelihood that inner city private schools will survive.

Chapter 7

Factors Influencing School Effectiveness

In recent years considerable attention has been focused on the question of what constitutes an "effective" school. This discussion has considerable relevance to the current study. The inner city private schools included in the study appear to have many of the traits which have become identified with school effectiveness.

There has been considerable disagreement among education researchers on the nature of school effectiveness and on the proper ways of measuring that effectiveness. Professor James Coleman fired the first shots in this continuing controversy in the mid-60s with his studies which argued that family background differences account for much more variation in achievement than do school differences, because schools are not exercising their full potential to act as effective equalizers of educational opportunity. More recently, Coleman has published articles arguing that, while this overall conclusion remains valid, some schools are exceptions. He has, in fact, concluded that this is the case with private schools compared with public schools. Some schools, he is saying, are relatively more effective than others, after equating for background differences.

A body of literature has emerged, moreover, which has sought to identify factors that seem to determine school effectiveness. A number of researchers agree that differences in school effectiveness are attributable to several factors: strong instructional leadership by the principal; a school climate which by virtue of being orderly and safe is especially conducive to learning; staff agreement on and emphasis of basic skills instruction; high teacher expectation of pupil performance; and a system which links pupil performance to instructional objectives.

Other factors identified in the school effectiveness literature include the expectation for shared work and experimentation among the teaching staff. Simply stated, successful schools are those in which teachers frequently cooperate on issues related to teaching, and in which improvement is accepted as being continuous throughout a teaching career.

Our study of inner city private schools made a number of significant findings in light of these identified factors related to school effectiveness.

Because of the relatively small size of inner city private schools and the limited resources available for hiring assistant principals and specialized staff, principals are involved in all aspects of school life. Because these schools are given considerable autonomy in day-to-day administration and in shaping curriculum and other matters, the principal plays a pivotal leaderhsip role. Most of the principals in our study seemed convinced that if the school could develop challenging, relevant classwork for children, then discipline problems would greatly diminish or even vanish. We found that 92 percent of the principals were in accord with this view, rejecting the notion that children from poor homes create inevitable, even incorrigible, disciplinary problems.

Equally significant, all but 13 percent of the

teachers reported that working with their fellow teachers was professionally stimulating. This factor of shared work is sometimes difficult to maintain because of the high attrition rate among teachers, so the principal is forced to play a central role in exercising strong educational leadership and fostering a dynamic educational climate in the schools.

Unquestionably, one of the most effective features of these schools is the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning. Ninety-three percent of the teachers reported that the general atmosphere in their schools stimulated learning — in sharp contrast to the complaints of disorder and even violence in many public schools. It is not easy to isolate reasons for the contrast. As we have seen previously, the differences cannot be explained solely by claims that the student body of the private schools represents an elite strata of society.

Emphasis on Socialization

We are inclined to stress the role that school officials play in fostering a safe school environment. As we have seen, school policies center more on socializing children rather than using admission and expulsion practices to weed out undesirables.

It has long been recognized that the public schools labor under diffuse goals. No doubt the root of this problem runs deep in American culture. Americans presume that education can cure many social ills whose origins can be found outside educational institutions. There is now widespread conviction that public schools have tried to satisfy too many expectations, and that in doing so, they have confused and dispersed the goals and efforts of public education. The trend back toward basic education in recent years has not stemmed this malaise.

As we have seen, there is a striking degree of agreement among teachers, administrators and

parents about the fundamental goals of private inner city schools, including the need for quality education, the need for supportive learning environments, and the need to convey religious and moral values.

Unlike the public schools, which are increasingly viewed as remote and unresponsive, the private schools have reached out to make the community members participants in their programs. This practice helps to minimize the authority chasms that beset schools operating in other environments.

Hitherto, almost all of the literature measuring school effectiveness has been based on criteria such as test scores, or other objective standards. But serious questions have been raised about the validity of relying exclusively on this method of assessing effectiveness. The main problem with using what is called "student outcomes" is knowing what outcomes to select and how to measure them. The standards of the researcher are typically substituted for those of the parent or the community.

The school effectiveness literature which relies on student outcomes alone is far from conclusive. While it may be possible to state with some certainty that some schools make a difference, there is still much to be learned about which variables are critical, to what extent they contribute to different kinds of achievement, and in what circumstances. Given all these unanswered issues, it is surprising that the root assumptions of this approach have not been questioned more critically.

As an alternative to this reliance on objective student outcomes to evaluate effectiveness, we have developed another approach to the question. Unlike the student outcome approach, which has dominated literature in this field for years, our alternative approach begins with an evaluation of how the patrons of the schools assess school effectiveness. In other words, it is an attempt to judge school effectiveness by

the choices parents make and by their stated satisfaction with the school services their children are receiving.

As it turns out, the data already cited in this study offer convincing evidence that parents who choose inner city private schools are highly satisfied, and that for the vast majority, their choice does not disguise an underlying dissatisfaction.

Quality Rated High

The overwhelming percentage of parents rate their school quality as very high. Only about 11 percent of the respondents were somewhat critical of their school quality. When this is broken down by parental level of education, the vast majority at each level still rank the school quality high. Not surprisingly, those at the highest level of education are more likely to assess school quality less highly.

But why do even those who are somewhat dissatisfied with the quality of the schools keep their children in them? Because, as we have seen, an alternative to discontinuing their use of the schools is to use their voice to influence school practices and policies. The provisions by inner city private schools for parental involvement clearly provide this important opportunity.

One of the most remarkable phenomena identified by the study is the fact that the market for private inner city schools exists despite the fact that low and moderate income parents must make considerable monetary sacrifices to send their children to private schools. The most frequent tuition rate is in excess of $500, and fully 55 percent of the parents are sending more than one child to a private school. Yet half of the parents have a family income of less than $10,000.

When asked what effect a $15 monthly tuition increase might have on their decision to keep their children at the private school, only 36 percent of the

parents said they could afford such an increase. But, significantly, only 28 percent said the increase would force them to remove their children. Thirty-five percent said they would find some additional income.

Clearly, inner city parents are tenaciously loyal in their preferences for these schools, which suggests that they are strongly convinced that these schools are in their children's best interest. Further, preferences which entail economic sacrifices are less prone to self-deception.

Segregation Charge Is Unfounded

As our study points out, there is no evidentiary basis for the allegation that these schools help foster increased racial or class segregation, or segregation of talent and ability. Clearly, these schools do not enhance or encourage what is commonly referred to as "white flight" from urban public schools.

Moreover, we think it important to note that the patrons of inner city private schools are themselves predominantly nonwhites who are members of groups which have been victims of social and economic discrimination and deprivation. The option to choose an alternative to public education is not equally available to all racial and economic groups. Although urban public schools are beginning to develop alternatives which are appealing to the middle class, many affluent and aspiring parents have traditionally taken advantage of their option to move their children into suburban public school systems.

Yet, moving to the surburbs is not a realistic option for most nonwhites because of limited incomes and housing discrimination. Lacking adequate choices within most city school systems, they take advantage of the private alternatives in their own inner city neighborhoods.

If these parents are limited in their opportunities for residential and income mobility, educational

mobility for their children is at least available.

But, given their nature and their size, inner city private schools are, in fact, struggling to survive rather than expand. They are not proprietary, but see themselves as offering an important service to a limited population of youngsters. Aid to such schools does not portend opening a floodgate from the public schools.

Chapter 8

The Future of Inner City Private Schools

Inner city private schools are one of the truly remarkable developments in American education and, if given support and time, will become a potent force for the betterment of our society. These schools, structured in order to meet the special needs and aspirations of the individuals who populate the battered and often violent neighborhoods of this nation's central cities, are signs of hope to a near despairing people. But their future is uncertain.

This study has systematically analyzed the phenomenon of inner city private schools. It has documented the kinds of families who use the schools and explained why they do so. It has identified the backgrounds of the school administrators and teachers, and it has described what motivates them to work at inner city private schools. The study has shown how the schools educate, how they are managed and financed and why the educational product they supply is in high demand. But the study would be incomplete if it did not discuss the crucial question — what does the future hold for inner city private schools? And related to that question is an issue of public policy — what, if anything, should be done to assure that this kind of education continues to be available to urban

America?

Until now, little attention has been focused on the contributions inner city private schools make to a better life for those who use and are associated with the schools, to the various minority groups they serve and to society in general. Those studies that have focused on the private sector of urban education, while appallingly few in number, have tended to shy away from any proclamation about the success of private schools, in large part because of a fear of propagandists in the public school sector. The prevailing attitude seems to be that a positive statement about private education must imply a negative statement about public education. It is a strange "Catch 22", one that inhibits a sincere exchange of ideas and facts. And when it comes to a discussion of public policy options regarding urban education, such a condition clearly prejudices the debate and discourages productive policy changes. This study's descriptive analysis of an important component in urban education — inner city private elementary schools — can, if given careful and impartial consideration, elevate the discussion about how quality education can best be achieved in America.

The findings of our study suggest that whatever criteria are used to measure quality educational performance, inner city private schools do a good job. And, given the environmental constraints under which they function, these schools perform superbly. Yet, it is a sad but realistic irony that many of the schools, despite the fact that they have satisfied consumer preferences, face an uncertain future; their survival is in jeopardy.

The rapid change in the population of these schools in the years following World War II has left many inner city private schools hard-pressed to make financial ends meet. For some inner city parish schools, it has meant consolidating or closing. In Chicago, for instance, 14 schools have closed since 1974 because of

shaky finances. Also in the Archdiocese of Chicago, 19 schools have been consolidated since 1973 in order to keep them open. Other cities have faced similar financial problems. In New Orleans, 15 schools were closed in the 1970s because they could not balance their books even with consolidations.

Bleak Outlook for Survival

The question of whether economic realities will allow inner city private schools to survive is a very serious one. The outlook is bleak. The conclusions of our study corroborate a 1979 study that found a strong likelihood that many inner city schools will disappear because "the church appears to have reached its organizational limits for their support." Using data provided by the National Catholic Educational Association, the study states that during the 1967-73 period Catholic urban schools declined at a 10 percent rate, while Catholic inner city schools declined at a 20 percent rate. It found that inner city Catholic schools closed at a rate five times faster than did urban Catholic schools — from a 1967 high of 1,490 to a 1973 low of 1,052.

The teachers of inner-city schools are a special breed, but one that is threatened because of low salaries offered to attract and hold skilled lay personnel and because of shrinking numbers of teaching nuns and brothers. This double problem is rapidly becoming acute in many of the schools. Our study finds that the strength of these schools, and one of the most important reasons for their success, is the highly motivated and experienced corps of teachers who care for the unique educational needs of the children. In a discussion about compensation for teachers, we found that more than money matters. Job satisfaction, which includes religious motivation, desire to work for and with the poor, and harmonious work relationships

among staff and parents, is more compelling than dollars. But there is a financial limit beyond which many teachers dare not go.

The disparity between the salaries these schools can afford and the salaries the public sector offers is so vast that lay teachers, typically, have been able to "contribute" their energies for only a few years. Their own financial needs frequently require them to accept employment that provides greater monetary compensation. Our study found that the average annual salary in 1977-78 for teachers in inner city private schools was $7,654, compared with public school teachers' average annual salary of $14,617. Because most of the teachers in the private schools have degrees and credentials comparable to those of public school teachers, it is possible for the vast majority of them to move to higher paying teaching jobs. (See Table 23.)

TABLE 23

Annual Salaries of Teachers in
Target Inner-City Private Schools

Annual Salary	Percent of Sample
Less than $4,000	10
$4,000 — $5,500	20
$5,501 — $6,500	10
$6,501 — $8,000	22
$8,001 — $9,500	24
$9,501 and higher	13

n equals 339

Numbers do not total 100 percent due to rounding.

The second part of the teacher problem for these schools centers on the fact that the number of teaching nuns and brothers is diminishing. Currently, the blend

of lay and religious faculty, of young and of experienced teachers, is a remarkably valuable asset. But this condition too is in jeopardy. We found that the teaching religious are older and in many cases near retirement. Moreover, we know that fewer women and men are entering the religious life and that many teaching religious are leaving or have left the teaching profession. In fact, there are now fewer than half as many teaching religious as there were just a decade ago.

A regrettable conclusion is that while the demand increases for the kind of education these schools offer, as evidenced by waiting lists for admission at nearly all the schools we studied, the ability to provide that education clearly appears to be in jeopardy.

Deteriorating Buildings

A third internal threat to survival for inner city private schools is the deteriorating condition of the physical facilities of the schools and the high costs of maintaining them. The schools, constructed years ago when energy and labor were less costly and more available, are now old buildings which are expensive to heat and burdensome to maintain. Other environmental demands common to life in the inner city, such as high incidents of vandalism and expensive insurance premiums, pressure even further the shaky economic bases from which these schools operate.

Despite the financially precarious condition of these schools, we found that school administrators have been forced to rely on essentially ad hoc and stopgap funding methods to keep their schools afloat. There is a demonstrated need to develop long-range plans at both the national and local levels to ensure their future. It is necessary for system-wide school administrators to determine where inner city private schools fit into comprehensive education plans and to mold a consensus as to the priority these schools are to be given in the long term.

Unless clear educational priorities are established which include a commitment from both church and community leaders to insure a financial base, the rather recent development of inner city private schools may well become a transitory moment in the history of urban education.

Based on our interviews with principals, we found that the resources now being used to finance the schools have nearly been exhausted. In the past 10 years, according to Thomas Vitullo-Martin, the Catholic Church alone has invested nearly one billion dollars in its inner city schools, largely from "hidden subsidies." Those subsidies came from sources that are now drying up, sources such as parish savings accounts and building funds which were accumulated in more prosperous times, initial diocesan loans that were forgiven and allowances from wealthier parishes which "adopted" inner city parishes for a period of time.

Ironically, the threats to the survivability of these private schools come at a time when a variety of plagues, from unemployment to cutbacks in government programs, have made the need for quality education all the more pressing. For many parents, private schools served as the only hope that their children could have a chance of living productive and happy lives, breaking out of the cycle of government dependence that had captured many of their families for generations.

The greatest threat to the existence of these schools is the present government policy which disallows direct financial relief to parents who pay tuition at inner city private schools. That threat exists because government policymakers have failed to deal resolutely with conflicts raised over questions of educational policy and with political pressures from the powerful education lobbies.

To restore both quality and equality in American

education, present government policy toward education must be re-evaluated. Professor James S. Coleman is one among the growing number of educators who has made that plea. Based on his recent research and that of his colleagues at the National Opinion Research Center, Coleman has concluded that traditional public policy support for public education is outmoded. In his study "Public and Private Schools," which he prepared for the National Center of Education Statistics, Coleman said that Catholic schools today provide better quality education (higher academic achievement in basic cognitive skills) and greater equality (less internal segregation) than do public schools. He calls for a re-evaluation of public education policy because, he says, societal changes have dramatically altered the basic assumptions upon which public education has traditionally operated.

Aid Must Come Soon

Such a re-thinking of education policy is especially critical for low income, urban parents. Their right to choose schools such as those in our study is rapidly dwindling, because they lack the financial means to make tuition payments. Unless they get help soon, economic realities will make a hollow mockery of the ostensible freedom of choice in education for the nation's poorest families.

In our study, inner city private school parents registered overwhelming support for tuition tax credit and education voucher programs that would help them pay tuition in the schools of their choice. Adoption of either program involves significant public policy changes.

The definition of a tuition tax credit is simple. Federal legislation providing a tuition tax credit would permit parents who pay tuition charges at private or public schools to subtract the amount of the credit from their federal income tax bill. A tax credit of $200 or

$500, for example, would be subtracted from a family's federal income tax liability.

To guarantee equal benefits for poor families, many proponents of tuition tax credit programs urge, most emphatically, that such legislation contain a "refund" provision that would enable the federal treasury to give a refund to poor families that pay little or no income tax, equal in amount to the credit to which they are entitled.

Most private school families with annual incomes of less than $5,000, and many with annual incomes as high as $10,000, would undoubtedly qualify for such tax credit refunds.

Since the parents we studied paid a mean tuition fee of about $400, had incomes well below the national average and had more deductions from federal taxes because of larger families, an immediate tax credit would be of enormous help. This is especially true when we look at the parents' response to a question in our study that dealt with ability to pay. We found that one-fourth of the parents said they would have to remove their child from an inner city private school if the tuition were raised $15 a month. The immediate impact of a tax credit would be to enable low-income parents to continue to pay tuition charges, even if moderately increased.

An education voucher program would operate somewhat like the GI Bill of Rights: it would provide vouchers to parents of school-age children for the education of their children in the public or private school of their choice. Such a program would give all families, regardless of income, the same choice of public and private schools.

Proponents of tuition tax credit and education voucher programs note that such programs would guarantee a "real" freedom of choice of schools for poor families, assure diversity of education for our pluralistic society, guarantee religious freedom in

parental choice of schools, promote social and educational equality, provide a free choice of schools with different religious and moral values, and apply market-place competition to education, thus assuring rivalry among high quality schools and the demise of poor quality schools.

A Change Is Needed

The adoption of either tax credits or education vouchers would alter to some degree the education available at inner city private schools and, for that matter, at all schools. While there may be some uncertainty over which program would be better for inner city private school families, there is no lack of certainty about the effects of current policy on those same parents. Present education policy is in dire need of change if the education provided by inner city private schools is to continue. Tuition tax credits or education vouchers are public policy options that, if adopted, would make the future more secure both for the schools and for the families who use them.

The data of our study make it abundantly clear that without some action, the internal and external threats faced by inner city private schools will lead to continued school closings.

Such a result would be tragic in many ways; especially when one considers the impact such a loss would have on the lives of the children in these schools, on the dreams of parents who are already making immense sacrifices to better the future of their children, on the missionary-like lives of principals and teachers in these schools, indeed, on the very quality of life in the neighborhoods of America's inner cities.

But there would be a more terrible loss, and that loss is intangible as far as the statistics of our study are concerned. It would be the loss of a unique spirit of joy and hope that permeates the atmosphere of these schools — an atmosphere that draws parents to a

personal involvement in their children's education, that binds in a spirit of family-like commitment teachers, parents and children. It would be that loss of belonging to and living in a community that would be most painful.